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777 448 Three impartially, the Komala moved inevitably into the Soviet orbit.

During this period VOKS, the Soviet international propaganda organization, was starting a number of "Iranian-Soviet Cultural Relations Societies" in all sections of Iran. As the Komala had grown too big to continue meeting in private homes, its leaders now asked the Soviets to found a branch in Mahabad; they hoped thus to obtain a place to meet without attracting too much attention. The Soviets readily complied, and it was founded, not as a branch of the Iranian-Soviet Relations Society, but as the "Kurdistan-Soviet Cultural Relations Society" (Anjoman-i-Farhangi-i-Kurdistan-o-Shuravi). The clubhouse was soon crowded with Kurds, who showed their gratitude to their new patrons by sending ten cases of cigarettes made of Kurdish tobacco to the victors of Leningrad.

186 536 441 It was at a ceremony in the society's clubhouse, in April 1945, that the Komala finally came into the open. The Soviet Consul from Rezaieh and the chief of VOKS in Azerbaijan were honored guests. The main feature of the program was an "opera" in which a woman called "Dalk Nishuman" (Mother Native Land) was represented as abused by three ruffians, "Iraq," "Iran," and "Turkey," finally to be rescued by her stalwart sons. The audience, unused to dramatic representations, was deeply moved, and blood-feuds generations old were composed as life-long enemies fell weeping on each other's shoulders and swore to avenge Kurdistan.

777 622 441 At this ceremony the future head of the Kurdish state, Qazi Muhammad, was finally admitted to the party, to the gratification of the Soviets, who had not liked the democratic organization of the Komala, and had long been looking for someone on whom they could count to lead it according to their suggestions. At first the Soviets, realizing the strength of the tribes, had approached tribal chiefs with requests to lead the nationalist movement. But only three of them commanded sufficient prestige for the task — Qarani Agha Rais-ol-Ashair, venerable chief of the Mamash and the acknowledged leader of the federation of which they were a part; Amir Khan Sharifi, chief of the Shikak and "grand old man" of Kurdistan; and Amir Asad of the Dehbokri, die-hard